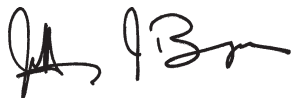


Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As you are aware, the 2005 session promises to be a challenging one as the state wrestles with a projected deficit approaching 800 million dollars. I am hopeful that by working together we can solve the state's fiscal problems, without invasive cuts in state programs or middle-class tax increases, while moving forward on key issues like property tax reform, prescription drug reimportation, and stem cell research. This mailer is designed to give you a look at some important issues that I will be working on during this session. As always, I value your participation and input as we endeavor to help improve life in this great state.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey J. Berger

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I WANT TO KNOW YOUR CONCERNS AND THOUGHTS!



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE JEFFREY J.

BERGER

PROUDLY SERVING WATERBURY'S



73rd
DISTRICT



- PROPERTY TAX REFORM PROPOSALS
- STEM CELL RESEARCH
- NURSING HOME USER FEE
- SURVEY: RESULTS FROM YOUR RESPONSES

Nursing Home User Fee

This session I am **SUPPORTING** legislation to enact a **NURSING HOME USER** fee. This proposal will produce an extra \$120 million in Medicaid matching funds by the federal government, without any additional costs to state taxpayers.

■ These user fees would **NOT** be assessed on nursing home patients, but on the nursing homes themselves.

■ Thirty-three states, including every other New England state, has adopted this fee system.

■ Connecticut currently ranks third worst in the nation in federal aid. For every tax dollar we send to Washington, we receive only 65 cents for state and federally administered programs.

■ The Connecticut Association of Healthcare Facilities has endorsed the bill.

Stem Cell Research



I am sponsoring legislation this session that will help make Connecticut a national leader in stem cell research. Stem cell research holds the promise of changing the face of medicine, of one day helping cure diseases like juvenile diabetes and Parkinson's disease. However, there is still a great deal of work to be done before we can realize these aspirations. This legislation will:

■ Establish a dedicated state fund for the support of stem cell research in Connecticut.

■ Allow the Department of Economic and Community Development, in consultation with other established organizations, to administer the fund and promote stem cell research in the state and encourage private investments.

Several states have begun initiatives. **NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT!**

Property Tax Reform

I am **CO-SPONSORING** legislation this session to finally give Waterbury's overburdened property taxpayers some relief. Currently Waterbury residents pay nearly four times the national average in property taxes. This has been a hardship on Waterbury's families and businesses for far too long. The state cannot continue to balance the budget on the backs of its urban property taxpayers.

The "**PROPERTY TAX FAIRNESS ACT**" (HB 5013) would qualify residents for a property tax reduction, if the property tax paid on their home and up to two motor vehicles exceeds what they pay in state income taxes. This bill would reduce the property taxes of qualified individuals by 75 percent of the difference between their property taxes and state income taxes. So if a resident paid \$6,000 in property taxes and \$2,000 in state income taxes during a fiscal year, they would see a \$3,000 reduction in property taxes.



At last check, HB 5013 had 43 co-sponsors, representing a broad mix of legislators, both Democrats and Republicans, from all over the state, and I am hopeful that this legislation will pass so we can finally grant some relief to the taxpayers of Waterbury.

I am also sponsoring legislation this session to equalize the motor vehicle tax across the state, so that taxpayers in urban areas like Waterbury are no longer left paying four to five times the rate as those in low mill rate areas. I believe it is only fair that a resident of New Canaan, who shares the same model vehicle and drives on the same roads as a Waterbury resident, pays the same tax rate.

Survey Results

THANK YOU to all those who completed a **SURVEY** in our last mailer. Every survey was reviewed and the results are listed below. Your input is very valuable to me as the legislature moves forward in the budget process.

Most popular programs for increased spending:

	MORE	SAME	LESS
Senior Prescription Aid	55%	23%	21%
Senior Healthcare Assistance	55%	25%	19%
Aid to the Disabled	49%	35%	16%
Aid to the Mentally Ill	45%	42%	13%
Veteran Services	42%	42%	16%

Most popular areas for funding cuts:

	LESS	SAME	MORE
Prisons	42%	47%	11%
Drug Prevention	41%	37%	22%
Aid to Business	35%	40%	25%
Rental Assist. - Families	31%	43%	26%

Questions:

Replace Governor's tax increases with a Millionaire's Tax?

YES - 59% NO - 41%

Keep Governor's taxes, but add Millionaire's Tax for education?

NO - 76% YES - 24%

Replace income tax with 12% sales tax extended to groceries, medicine, and all clothing?

NO - 91% YES - 9%

Get more tax money back by not counting federal aid against state spending cap?

YES - 86% NO - 14%